

Manassas Historic Resources Board
May 7, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting
Manassas Museum

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Rob Fisher at 7:04 p.m.

Determination of a Quorum:

A majority of the board is present at 7:09.

Board Members in Attendance: Rob Fisher, Robert Keller, Mark Olsen, Jill Pascale (late arrival at 7:09 p.m.), Don Wilson

Honorary Board Members in Attendance: Sue Parker

Board Members Absent: David Button, Lyshawn Dean, Connie Gilman

City Council Member Liaison: Michelle Davis-Younger, Council Member

Museum Staff in Attendance:

Community Development Staff: Elizabeth Via-Gossman, Director, Lisa Sievel-Otten, Communications Coordinator

Other in Attendance: Ken Johnson, Planning Commission member

Approval of Minutes of April 2, 2019:

Bob Keller moved to accept the minutes as written, and Don Wilson seconded the motion. The chairman opened the floor for discussion. There was no further discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair's Comments:

Rob Fisher reported on the enjoyable volunteer field trip to visit the Prince William County Police museum in Woodbridge, and reminded members of the upcoming Viking Festival on the lawn.

Sue Parker commented on the impressive turnout for the Bridging Cultures exhibit reception, a book talk on Cuban baseball, and a talk by Robert E. Lee interpreter Al Stone.

Council Comments: Michelle Davis-Younger reported that boards and committee members will be limited to two four-year terms, and Council is still discussing how to implement the term limits. She urged all board and committee chairs or their designees to attend the May 22 Council Appointments Committee meeting, where term limits implementation will be discussed.

Parks & Recreation Committee Liaison: Bob Keller

Bob Keller had no report.

Director's Report: Elizabeth Via-Gossman

- Ms. Via-Gossman welcomed Planning Commission member Ken Johnson, who attended for the Comprehensive Plan Update work session.
- She distributed an updated spreadsheet on Jennie Dean fundraising, noting \$12,000 on hand with several large pledges pending. \$100,000 needs to be in hand to contract for fabrication of the Jennie Dean statue, and a target date for the contract is early fall.
 - Of the \$350,000 project total, \$175,000 for site improvements has been included in CIP funds by Council.
 - We will continue fundraising later for the base relief sculptures.
 - We need a 6 month lead time for fabrication, and our goal is to unveil the statue in October of 2020.
- The trustee is reviewing two proposals for the Speiden House which would renovate and resell the house.
- Discussion on the Merchant Trust and museum expansion:
 - The \$1 million Merchant Trust was established in 2001 for museum expansion.
 - Bonds were never sold for the project, and it was shelved during the recession. Funds were spent on construction drawings during later expansion proposals.
 - The community was not interested in supporting a recent museum/library proposal.
 - With construction costs increasing, the expansion idea has been scaled back to a smaller addition for a larger community meeting space, collections and storage.
 - Bonds and the Merchant Trust funds for the expansion and exhibit renovation were included in the proposed FY20 budget, but have not been approved. Council will decide on the budget at the May 13 meeting.
 - Sue Parker noted that the Merchant family intended the trust to finance a new museum wing, and Liz Via-Gossman noted that the family would have to be consulted about using the trust for renovation rather than construction.
- The city has not yet completed the closing on the purchase of Annaburg, but the intent is to purchase the property for a park.

Committee Report: No Reports

New Business:

Work Session: 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update –Parks, Culture and Recreation

Board members discussed chapter 9 of the current Comprehensive Plan and envisioned a potential vision for cultural resources in 10, 20 and 30 years.

Draft Goal Statement Discussion:

- The word “reverence” might suggest a reverence for the “Old South.”
- The word “respect” might be better.
- The use of the word “reverence” should not be determined by political correctness.
- Like “commemoration” versus “celebration,” words can trigger different meanings.
- We should emphasize the importance of fostering knowledge.

What is your vision for historic and cultural resources in 20 years?

- An expanded state-of-the-art museum

- We will need more resources and have historic sites online because of the increasing population.
- We need to preserve sites like the 18 acres at Liberia as open land becomes scarcer.
- Manassas is not an island. As Prince William County expands in population, the border blurs, traffic increases, and more services are needed.
- We need to make provisions that historic properties will be protected, even if they are in private hands, like the Speiden House.
- Fear that interest in historic properties is not as high as it used to be. It's our job to educate people so that there is interest in sites.

Key Issues:

- Generating revenue is important, but educating the public is more important.
- Revenue is a plus, but not a priority.
- Seeing a transition toward more emphasis on the arts than on historic resources.
- The arts and historic resources are not mutually exclusive; we can support both and maintain a balance.
- An intern will be hired this summer to research African American history south of the railroad tracks as a start to telling more neighborhood history stories.
- What smaller monuments—like the Jennie Dean cottage moved to Prince William St.--need to be identified and preserved?
- We need to think about more modern history in preservation. For instance, Georgetown South now qualifies as a historic district.
- How do we define cultural resources? Who defines important places? What will cultural resources be in 20 years?
 - Resources are defined by the community, and that determines what stories to tell.
 - We need to include businesses, schools, religious and social institutions as cultural resources.
 - As we see redevelopment, and as buildings age, they may become less valuable and may not be able to be saved.

Goals and Strategies

- Are goals and strategies tracked to see if they've been accomplished?
 - Yes—they are listed in the comp plan appendix and become a kind of to-do list for staff.
- We need some strategy to address how we identify properties that need to be protected.
 - we don't have an ordinance requiring archaeology for historic properties as PWC does
 - such a policy might be important for development proposals
- Is there a site that should be protected that has not been protected?
 - The last Historic District survey was in 2006, and did not change except to identify potential post-war residential areas that might be included, but have not yet been included.

- We need an update of the cultural resources survey.
- Are other structures worth saving? Are we stuck with determinations we made in the 1970s?
- Historical markers or plaques on buildings could identify the significance of homes, churches and other buildings. This might be a good project for the city's 150th anniversary in 2023.
- We should not only talk about preservation of historic structures, but we should discover new spaces.
 - We should know about site significance when infill is developed or redeveloped, and know whether it should be protected.
- The Planning Commission's Comprehensive Plan Update Committee will meet on May 22 to discuss Parks, Culture & Recreation/Environment & Health.

Old Business:

Bob Keller reported that the license plate project has been put on hold to incorporate into the City's 150th anniversary commemoration, when there might be a new logo to use on the plates.

Close of Business:

Rob Fisher asked for any other business. No further business was brought forward. The next meeting is scheduled for June 4 at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

Bob Keller moved to adjourn the meeting and Mark Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.



 Rob Fisher, Chairman



 Date